

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 /011 R

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APPROVED BY: S/S-O:LMATTESON

DIST: NSCE, S/S

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O 042229Z NOV 74 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 242524

EXDIS TOSEC 691

FOLLOWING REPEAT NICOSIA 3873 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
LONDON ATHENS ANKARA BEIRUT CINCENR USDOCOSOUTH
PARIS MOSCOW NATO 4 NOVEMBER.

QUOTE

S E C R E T NICOSIA 3873

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: X-GDS1

TAGS: UR, EAIR, CY, UK, TU

SUBJECT: AEROFLOT OFFER TO CYPRUS AIRWAYS; NICOSIA AIRPORT
REOPENING

REF: STATE 242003

1. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER OLVER SAW CLERIDES NOVEMBER 4 FOR
DISCUSSION INTER ALIA OF AEROFLOT AND BMA OFFERS AS WELL AS BRIEFLY,
NICOSIA AIRPORT REOPENING.

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2. CLERIDES MENTIONED ONE NEW FACTOR ARGUING FOR QUICK ACTION

TO COUNTER AEROFLOT OFFER. AEROFLOT HAS TOLD GOC THAT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL LARNACA AIRPORT REHABILITATED/EXTENDED. IT IS PREPARED INITIATE OPERATIONS IMMEDIATELY USING YEROSKIPOS STRIP IN PAPHOS. USSR IS ASSERTING THAT ITS EXISTING BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH CYPRUS ENTITLE IT TO THIS SINCE NICOSIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS CLOSED. CLERIDES EXPRESSED TO OLVER SAME CONCERN HE HAD TO ME ABOUT LIKELIHOOD OF IMMINENT SURFACING OF AEROFLOT OFFER IN COMMUNIST PRESS.

3. OLVER PROVIDED CLERIDES WITH INFORMATION CONTRASTING BMA AND AEROFLOT OFFERS. WHILE IT TRUE THAT YAK-40 COULD OPERATE FROM YEROSKIPOS AIRPORT AND BMA'S VISCOUNTS COULD NOT, VISCOUNTS HAVE OPERATING RANGE OF 1500 MILES WITH 50 PASSENGERS. YAK-40, ON OTHER HAND, COULD CARRY ONLY 12-14 PASSENGERS AS FAR AS ATHENS; ONLY 6 OR 7 TO SOPHIA WHICH BEING MENTIONED BY AEROFLOT AS ITS DESIRED EUROPEAN TERMINUS. THIS IS ASIDE FROM QUESTION OF YAK-40'S LACK OF AIRWORTHINESS CERTIFICATE.

4. CLERIDES AGREED THAT IF AIRPORT FACILITY EXISTED WHICH COULD BE USED BY VISCOUNTS, HE WOULD PREFER BMA OFFER, HE TOLD OLVER THAT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WOULD MEET THIS WEEK TO MAKE FINAL DECISION ON EXTENSION OF LARNACA WHICH, WHEN COMPLETED, COULD BE USED BY BMA. HE ESTIMATED OPTIMISTICALLY THAT WORK ON LARNACA COULD BE COMPLETED IN EIGHT WEEKS. UK EXPERTS IN SBA'S THINK SIX MONTHS MORE LIKELY.

5. OLVER COMMENTED TO ME THAT THE LONGER IT TAKES TO GET LARNACA OPENED, THE MORE PROBABLE THAT GOC WILL FEEL IT HAS TO ACCEPT AEROFLOT OFFER.

6. OLVER AND I HAVE AGREED SET UP ON AN URGENT BASIS A COMMITTEE TO STUDY ASPECTS OF AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT FOR OPERATION NICOSIA AIRPORT UNDER UN/ICAO SUPERVISION WITH GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOT OBSERVERS. BECAUSE OF UN/ICAO CENTRAL ROLE, OLVER IS ASKING UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE WECKMANN DESIGNATE HIS SENIOR POLITICAL ADVISOR TO ATTEND. WE ARE AIMING FOR A FIRST MEETING NOVEMBER 5 AND HOPE TO HAVE COMMENTS FOR DEPARTMENT BY NOVEMBER 6.

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7. I HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN CHRISTOPHIDES NOVEMBER 5 TO DISCUSS AEROFLOT OFFER PURSUANT INSTRUCTIONS PARA 4 STATE 240145 AS AMENDED BY SECTO 317. CRAWFORD UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: OPENING OF OFFICES, AIRPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE242524
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:LMATTSON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740316-0253
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741172/aaaacjlo.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: STATE 242003
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <25 MAR 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AEROFLOT OFFER TO CYPRUS AIRWAYS; NICOSIA AIRPORT REOPENING
TAGS: EAIR, UR, CY, UK, TU, AEROFLOT
To: ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005